

REMARKS

Regarding the Claim Rejections

There have been two (2) Office Actions (OA) in this case 07/10/2003 and 02/19/2004. In the first OA Claims 9-17 and 21 ...

... are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim, any intervening claims and all other related issues of this office action.

In the Office Action Summary of the second OA, all claims 1-27 are indicated as rejected – but the Detailed Action gives no grounds of rejection are given for Claims 9-17 and 21.

Consequently, there are no rejections pending for Claims 9-17 and 21 that constitute a *prima facie* case of unpatentability.

Claims 1-8, 18-20, and 22-27 stand rejected. The undersigned reasserts that no *prima facie* case of unpatentability has been established for these claims. However, these claims have been cancelled in this application to expedite issuance of a patent as to the allowable claims.

Regarding the Claim Objections.

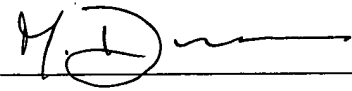
Claims 9-17 and 21 have be rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. No issues remain regarding these claims. Any rejection of these claims would be an initial rejection, requiring withdrawal of the finality in this case.

CONCLUSION

With consideration of the above amendments and remarks, the undersigned submits that this application is in condition for allowance, and such disposition is earnestly solicited. If the Examiner believes that the prosecution might be advanced by discussing the application with the undersigned, in person or over the telephone, we would welcome the opportunity to do so.

Respectfully submitted,

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